

Military Dogs to Get New Hospital

Construction will begin in May on a new facility in Texas to replace the current hospital.

The U.S. Department of Defense will build a new, state-of-the-art hospital at Lackland Air Force Base for military police dogs to replace the current aging facility.

Currently, the Military Working Dogs Veterinary Service, which provides medical help to canines guarding against terrorism, is located in a crumbling, 38-year-old, 15,000-square-foot facility on the base outside San Antonio, Texas.

Work is set to begin in May on a 30,950-square-foot hospital, to open in September 2007. McGoldrick Construction Services Corp. of San Antonio has been awarded a \$9.27 million contract to build the hospital.

The new hospital, at more than twice the size of the current one, will let the service keep functions such as radiology, surgery, internal medicine and critical care compartmentalized.

Army Lt. Col. Michael Lagutchik, director of the veterinary service, said the hospital will have designated suites for dental work and space for dogs recovering from surgery or suffering from hip, back and orthopedic injuries.

It will also have a 40-kennel recovery wing with state-of-the-art underwater therapeutic exercise treadmills.

The hospital treats mainly large breeds, such as Labrador Retrievers, German Shepherd Dogs and Dutch Shepherds, who are physically active during their military and police work, sometimes resulting in injury, Lagutchik said.

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